

Barber (J.)

DR. BARBER'S ✓

A D D R E S S ,

BEFORE THE

BOSTON PHRENOLOGICAL SOCIETY.



(Box)



AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

BOSTON PHRENOLOGICAL SOCIETY,

ON THE

EVENING OF ITS ORGANIZATION

AT THE

MASONIC TEMPLE, DEC. 31, 1832.

BY JONATHAN BARBER,

Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, London: Instructor in
Elocution, in Harvard University.



BOSTON:

MARSH, CAPEN & LYON.

1833.

Boston, December 31, 1832.

Dear Sir,

At a meeting of the Boston Phrenological Society, we were appointed a committee to present the thanks of the Society to you, for your very interesting Address delivered this evening, and to request a copy of the same for the press.

Very respectfully yours,

J. G. STEVENSON.
S. G. HOWE.
NAHUM CAPEN.

DR. JONA. BARBER.

Cambridge, January 9th, 1833.

Gentlemen,

Agreeably to your request, I send you a copy of the Address I had the honor of delivering before the B. P. S. It will at all times afford me pleasure by any exertions of mine to contribute to the success of a Society in whose objects I feel so great an interest.

I am, Gentlemen,

Very respectfully yours,

J. BARBER.

To
J. G. STEVENSON, M. D.
S. G. HOWE, M. D.
N. CAPEN, Esq.

ADDRESS.

We are met, Gentlemen, on this occasion, for the purpose of consummating the formation of a Phrenological Society, by the submission of the final draft of the constitution, and the choice of officers. I presume, from the tenor of the former, that our object is, primarily, to examine the fundamental data of Phrenology; in other words, the doctrine maintained by phrenologists, of the coincidence of certain external manifestations on the cranium, with the intellectual faculties and predominating moral tendencies of individuals.

Secondly, we propose to admit within the scope of our inquiries, whatever relates to human welfare, under the general term of Anthropology: the means of improving education, of bettering the condition of prison discipline, of regulating punishment with a view to the reformation of criminals, and the lessening the number of crimes; of determining the value and advisable extent of eleemosynary establishments, of simplifying the principles of political economy and morals, and thus giving them greater certainty. I conceive that inquiries on these and kindred subjects, naturally fall among the objects to be, finally, considered by a Phrenological Society.

As, however, our views on other subjects of Anthropology cannot fail to be greatly modified by the truth or falsehood of Phrenology, I venture strenuously

to recommend, that it be our first object to obtain the evidence necessary to determine on its pretensions.

The time of our meeting, Gentlemen, on this last day of the year, has, as you know, a special reference, being the birth day of Dr. Spurzheim, one of the founders of Phrenology, as well as the accomplished advocate of the science. To his recent visit and labors amongst us, the existence of our Society is directly owing. In the midst of us he delivered his latest testimony in its favor; a testimony to which death has now set his seal, under circumstances calculated to bestow upon it a more than common interest.

As respects himself, he died, as it is enviable for such as are prepared, to die; in the very midst of his labors, whilst eagerly engaged in the explanation and defence of favorite doctrines, to which his life had been devoted, and which he deemed in the highest degree momentous to human happiness.

I presume none of us would wish to evade the admission, that our organization as a Society, is attributable to the impression we received from his lectures; an impression, strengthened on my part, by the perusal of several of his works, published since his death, which have placed his name under the sanction and safeguard of immortality. They contain a body of truth, worthy the earnest consideration of the age, and appear to me to place their author, for comprehension, originality, good sense, discrimination, and benevolence, in proud competition with the most celebrated founders of moral sects. In these remarks I allude particularly to his 'Catechism of the Natural Laws,' and the 'Treatise on Education.'

I will not, on this occasion, indulge in the expression of feelings prompted by personal regard, and the recollection of the friendly and improving intercourse I had the honor and happiness to enjoy with this enlightened and amiable man—nor will I dwell on the painful emotions which its sudden and unexpected cessation occasioned, and with which I watched his progress to the gates of death. Confident, that if he could be heard from that state of pure intelligence and perfect happiness on which I humbly hope he has entered, he would request us to abstract ourselves from personal feelings and regrets to the objects of his own enthusiastic labors, I will at once call your attention to the points I propose to discuss. I have thought the most suitable may be,—the claims of Phrenology as a subject of inquiry—the proper method of investigating its evidence—the duties arising from a conviction of its truth or falsehood.

The importance of Phrenology cannot be viewed in the same light by those who are not in possession of the proofs it has to offer, as by those who are perfectly satisfied of their validity. I propose to consider its claims as an inquirer, not as a convert.

These, as respects ourselves, must, of course, be resolved, in a considerable degree, into what we have heard from Dr. Spurzheim, and the *a priori* credence, which, in the absence of the means of personal conviction, we may be disposed to give to it. To this may be added, what we have since read upon the subject of Phrenology, in his works, and in those of other accomplished individuals who have investigated the data on which it rests—and, as I think, especially the testimo-

nies on record of the practical application of the science in the detection of the characters and dispositions of individuals by experienced phrenologists.* I mention all these, however, only as preliminary inducements to personal examination, by which, alone, personal *conviction* can be obtained, or what may be considered proof in the proper sense of that term.

Phrenologists maintain the great importance of their science on the ground, that they are able to predicate the intellectual capacity and moral dispositions of individuals by the form of the cranium, and such other indications as belong to the doctrine of the temperaments. That, when once acquainted with the influences, intellectual and moral, to which an individual has been subjected, the judgment of well instructed phrenologists will not be confined to barren and illusive generalities, but will extend to specific indications of disposition, and of fitness for particular pursuits. They assure us that their data rest upon the immovable basis of observation—that they have been tested on the most extensive scale, their examinations having been made on the most extraordinary individuals of many countries, in courts, in society at large, in prisons and penitentiaries, in schools, and in institutions for the insane. Farther, that these data can at any time be verified by appeals to phrenological collections, by persons having the necessary preliminary knowledge, or receiving the proper explanations from those who possess it.

* Such accounts, for instance, as those of Dr. Gall's visits to the prisons of Berlin and Spandau—of Mr. De Ville's Predictions on board the ship England; and Mr. Coombe's Visit to Dublin. See *Phrenological Journal*.

Phrenology, (you will observe I always speak in her name, not in my own) by specifying the fundamental powers of the mind, claims to become the basis of philosophy. It makes war on all the prevailing systems, and ascribes their errors to *the neglect of the study of the brain, in combination with the observation of the intellectual and moral phenomena*. Maintaining, that the brain is not, as has been commonly supposed, a unit, but a congregation of organs manifesting the different faculties of the mind, the phrenologists deduce from this fact a greater number of original faculties than former metaphysicians.

As the degrees of the respective powers and feelings are found proportionate to the development of particular classes of organs, they deduce from such development the varieties of intellectual and moral character which life presents.

They consider each intellectual faculty and feeling apart; maintaining the peculiar doctrine, that *all* its modes of action are to be contemplated as completely independent of those of any other, whether as manifested primarily in *attention*, in the power of recalling its own ideas by *memory*, adding to those of the same class by *association*, combining them in new forms, by the higher power of *imagination*, or forming correct notions of the *relations* which belong to its own class of ideas, under the name of *judgment*. Apart from the exercise of the special faculties, they deny the existence of attention, memory, imagination and judgment; maintaining that there are as many sorts of these as there are faculties and feelings, and that the assertion of their existence in the abstract, common to all the

popular systems, is wholly gratuitous. In a word, the manifestations of these powers, indicate, simply, different states of the special faculties, and different degrees of their activity.

Considering each faculty as commensurate with the size and activity of its particular organ, phrenologists assign to education and circumstances only a limited influence. These cannot produce the powers, they can only afford opportunities for their full development, according to their natural strength. They appeal to life and observation in proof of these notions. Thus, they say, for instance, it is notorious, that one man will have a great memory for words and their combinations, none for those of numbers; that another will be excited to strong attention by music, while you cannot interest him in a discussion on metaphysics; that a third will imagine new combinations of machinery, but cannot produce those of poetry. Thus partial genius implies the exercise of a special faculty, or at least of a limited combination of faculties, in a high state of activity. A universal genius, either in intellect or morals, is a fiction of the imagination, but the approximation to it is in proportion to the strength and number of the powers.

They assign to the intellect, a grand division of *knowing* and *reflective* functions. The latter may be brought in aid of *any* of the former. Thus, for instance, the simple notions of number, place, language, imitation, constructiveness, may all be ~~adjusted~~ ^{adjusted} by the reflective powers, and are so assisted in all cases of eminence. Hence partial geniuses do not differ so much in power as in their choice of pursuits, dependent on the predominant activity of some one of the knowing

faculties consequently, no one has a right to arrogate to himself the superiority. I would here observe, that this analysis, and these explanations, if correct, must be of great practical importance, both as respects the direction of individual exertion, and the management of education.

You all remember the earnest attention Dr. Spurzheim received in the treatment of the metaphysical part of his subject. The mental analysis he submitted came upon us with a new and most exciting interest, whatever attempts may have since been made to attenuate it, or refer it to other sources. To form an estimate of its value, we must look to its practical effects; to the use which can be made of it in the improvement of the mind. Real analysis is always practical. Its results are, infallibly, increase of power. This is as true in moral speculation, as in the severer sciences. Let us try the phrenological division of the faculties by this test. In the first place, any faculty described, becomes, by virtue of it, a more distinct and definite object of attention; its manifestations can be more accurately traced, its simple effects better understood, and an increased incitement is supplied to its cultivation or restraint. This is true of the intellectual faculties. It is equally so of the feelings. The more we know of them in their simple and uncompounded character, and of their intention and effects, the better we can ascertain their *appropriate* gratification or restriction with reference to that great system of natural and moral legislation, 'whose end is the harmony of the universe and its seat the bosom of God.'

How much were we struck with the compendious, but

pregnant remark, that all the *feelings*, even those accounted most amiable, are blind : that the intellect only *knows* and *judges*. What a distinct boundary is here marked out, between the powers which excite us to action, and those which determine how far these ought to be indulged or restrained, and by which their mutual action and re-action on each other is to be regulated.

I ought also to refer to the assertion of phrenologists, that it is not a mere tenet of philosophy, but that the physical constitution of man demonstrates the *supremacy* of the intellect combined with that class of feelings denominated by them appropriately human. On the recognition of this doctrine, and its adoption in practice, say they, depends the perfection of the individual, and, consequently, the improvement of the species.

Admitting that Bishop Butler and others have recognised this principle, is it not a little singular that these queer people, the phrenologists, should have placed it in a stronger light than before? This they have done, by assigning to the intellect a specific province, and by *classifying* the feelings which they deem exclusively human.

Let us trace the practical results of the phrenological doctrines a little further. Suppose a person past the middle age, just returned from one of the lectures of our late lamented friend, expressing the natural language of his mind. How would it run? Would it not be something like the following? ‘Really, these notions are striking, and, as it seems to me, important. I wish they had been presented to me in early life. I should have tested many faculties which I have allowed to slumber in inactivity, and exercised others

much more. Constructiveness, for instance! I have scarcely ever taken a tool into my hands. In the use of a pencil, or a graver, I have no skill. Really, I never thought of trying to learn different arts. Perhaps I might have drawn, and painted, and been able to make machines. How often have I been put to serious inconvenience, by the want of a little more constructiveness,—been obliged to wait for a workman to do what I might easily have learned to do for myself. How I should like, just now, to be able to take in an elegant manner a mask or bust, for the sake of verifying phrenology. *Education* is strangely imperfect, notwithstanding our pompous pretensions about it!—At all events, if I had known or thought of this faculty of *constructiveness*, I would have exercised it, assiduously. But alas! the unit escaped me; not only was I never taught to exercise it, I was not even taught to know it—to contemplate it as a *faculty*; much less to regard it as a principal one in a combination to which I can now refer the wonders of a Raphael, the magical scenes of a Salvator Rosa, the uncreated beauty of the breathing marble, and glowing canvass of a Canova and a Titian.'

Again these phrenologists contend, that they bring us into much closer acquaintance with the nature and effects of the feelings than your inferior tribes of philosophers. They no sooner give a propensity a name, and disentangle it from its fellows, than it begins to manifest itself by all its own special attributes, and you become acquainted with it as you never were before. Acquisitiveness, for example! How perfect a conception, says the phrenologist, will I give you of its na-

ture and effects. You shall see, that, however disguised, it is *essentially* selfish; utterly regardless of all social claims, all moral restraint. Have an eye upon it, constantly, in yourself and others; acting independently of the higher sentiments, its sure consequences are fearful fraud in individuals, and the sad want of morality which prevails in society. It leads to discord, conflict, and all the frightful evils which would attend the agency of a powerful and purely malign spirit. And, alas! such is the weakness of human intellect, that, though suffering under its effects, man is but half conscious of its destructive agency, till I, by virtue of my analysis, identify and expose its aberrations. Will you say the views I have presented in this analysis, continues he, are but well known common places? Do they exert no influence on your habits of thinking; suggest no motives to control the demon within; lead to no useful restriction of this propensity in the institutions of society? Similar remarks might be made on the other selfish faculties, such as self-esteem, love of approbation, &c.

But, says the phrenologist, I will not only bring you into the dark recesses of human selfishness, but you shall pass with me, thence, upward to light. I will lead you by the hand till you shall behold a region, not less lovely and attractive than that to which the Roman poet led his hero through the regions of despair.

‘His demum exactis——

Devenere locos lætos, et amœna vireta

Fortunatorum nemorum, sedes que beatas;

Largior hic campos æther, et lumine vestit

Purpureo.’

I will shew you the delights and consequences of *benevolence*, the awful sanctions of *justice*, you shall listen

with me to the inspiring whispers of approving conscience, and behold from the green hill side of *my* philosophy, the cheering scenes which *hope* gilds with her fairy hues, and all the land of promise over which *ideality*, *wonder*, and *veneration* preside. We phrenologists, (it is *they*, Gentlemen, not I, who speak) will shew you the faculties, thus denominated, inherent in man's nature, manifested by his physical organization, and that on their paramount and restraining efficacy, under the supervision of improved intellect depends the happiness of the individual and the hopes of our race.

Thus the phrenologists claim for their metaphysics one especial point of superiority, that they have separated by a broader and brighter line than preceding inquirers, the distinctive characteristics of man as compared with the inferior animals; and, seriously, if we admit the correctness of their analysis of the human powers, I see not how this claim can be disputed, or how we can deny that they have, thus, presented morals in a more simple and impressive point of view than they had attained before.

From the data obtained by the combined study of the brain with the moral and intellectual phenomena, phrenologists proceed to deduce the physical, moral and intellectual laws. It is not to be denied, that some of the speculations of the phrenological writers, on this branch of their subject, are of a very imposing character. They set forth in a novel and striking manner what they deem the *causes* of the evils which afflict society—shewing these to be certain specific combinations of the faculties in too great activity, or too little checked by the restraining authority of intellect and of

the powers, exclusively human. The use they make of their *nomenclature*, simplifies their inductive processes, and gives a clearer and more impressive character to these moral disquisitions. In practical affairs, names are often made to stand for things, and here lies the foundation of many fallacies; but this shews the *power* of a nomenclature, which, if based on truth, is always of great assistance in science.

I am not aware that any but the phrenological writers have perceived, and clearly stated, the fallaciousness of the general expectation that the cultivation of the intellectual powers, and the progress of mere knowledge, will remove the *moral* evils of society. They contend that the notions which exist on this subject are chimerical and extravagant; and that the cultivation of the moral *feelings* is essential to the production of the anticipated improvement. In this respect the deductions of phrenology are in harmony with christianity.

Phrenologists contend, of course, that the brains' structure has an influence upon human actions; and that the admission of this truth is an important factor hitherto left out in the computation of the probabilities of improvement in the human race, and of the degree to which it may be ultimately carried. They consider the brain as subject, generally, to the following organic laws. First, that parts assigned to special faculties will increase in size, and be active, in proportion to their exercise. Secondly, that if not exercised, they will probably diminish in size as well as activity. Thirdly, that, thus, classes of organs greatly exercised, will acquire, in proportion to their original capacity, an ascendancy in the general system, and that, consequent-

ly, the class of faculties and propensities dependent on them will be active accordingly. Farther, they think it very probable, that, as to intellectual powers, moral dispositions, and animal propensities, children start from a higher or lower point of organization, according to the activity or restraint imposed upon the respective faculties by the parents. They think, that on the operation of this law depends, in part, the improvement and deterioration of races, the rise and fall of empires.

It must be confessed, we are yet strangely ignorant of facts with reference to the laws of hereditary descent. Phrenological writers have shewn a praiseworthy attention to this subject. The collection of farther particulars upon it will come most appropriately within the scope of the inquiries of this society. We may form some notion of the scantiness of our information about the organic laws of the brain, by recollecting the manifestation of surprise occasioned by the production of the two masks of Oldham the mechanic; the one taken at 26 years of age, and the other, (as I think), at 37. During the interval, many great mechanical inventions were the result of his labors, and the intellectual organs of the forehead were shewn, by comparing the masks with each other, to have increased considerably.

Phrenology, (presumptuous science that it is,) claims to take *education* under its special charge. We, alone, say the believers, can safely promise its radical improvement—for we, alone, can pretend to predicate from the organization of the young, their special faculties and dispositions, the pursuits for which they are fitted, and how each should be treated.

You point to your aborigines, and shew nations disappearing by intemperance—but we will shew you other methods of destroying the physical system, and of infallibly rendering the mind the feeble and dastardly companion of an effeminate body. We always except individual cases. In such, a glorious intellect and high moral powers may be, sometimes, found with a weakly frame. We, nevertheless, proclaim to you that nations decline by a cause hitherto scarcely adverted to, a deteriorating organization. We tell you that if you refuse to modify your present vaunted methods of infant and female education, a succeeding generation shall not be able to sustain the severer virtues, and the liberties bequeathed to you by your ancestors. We assert that the sanity and vigor of the physical system are already suffering deeply and extensively. Your females are almost universally delicate, and will sink yet deeper in debility and disease, if you do not provide against the evil. Thus, while your institutions are threatened with assault, on the one hand, by unrestrained acquisitiveness, self-esteem, love of approbation, and combativeness, they may be as surely undermined by excessive cultivation of the intellect, at the expense of the practical education of the higher feelings, and the health and strength of the body. We forewarn you, that your whole system of school and collegiate education must be shaped by what phrenology predicates of particular dispositions and talents; or you must necessarily be disappointed by frequent failures. *That self-esteem must be lessened in the young*, that they must be taught a reverential submission to the physical, moral and intellectual laws, and that all idle and fantastic notions

about their fitness for self-government, and the advantages of such a mode of education, must be abandoned ; that, otherwise, your most judicious efforts to govern and educate will continue to be often frustrated, as they now are, and even the religion sent by God to bless his creatures will be liable to fail of its sublime end and purposes. In a word (say these presumptuous reformers) we will shew you, as the rising orb of phrenology becomes lord of the ascendant, that professions, pursuits, amusements, hours of exertion, modes of instruction, both in teaching and preaching, must bear a reference to man's constitution as explained by *us*; and we boldly assert, that, hitherto, you have not been able to adopt any guiding principles in these respects.

Nay, more, we will not only shew you how to train boys and girls, but our science shall enter into every domestic, social, municipal, legislative and economical concern. By us you shall know (is it possible ?) how to choose a wife, a partner, a man for a place of trust, who are fit, and who are unfit, to be guides, pastors—presidents ; what races you ought to shun, and with what it will be wise to mix your blood and divide your heritage. We will strip off all false disguises. We will thus ensure a virtuous struggle against debasing propensities, and teach *real* humility ; procuring, at the same time, for the wise and virtuous, their rightful reverence and authority.

By the means Phrenology discloses, and these will be extended as the laws of hereditary descent are better known, whole races shall be regenerated. We allow that obedience to the moral laws is not to be expected in the present state of organization, combined with the

present maxims of society, but by admitting the influence of the brain, we have taken into our computation a redeeming principle, the principle of an infinite moral calculus. We have found that for which Archimedes sighed in vain, a fulcrum for the lever that shall move the world. We therefore confidently promise the accomplishment of our purposes, by virtue of the indestructible properties we have discovered in the physical constitution of man, and the unfailing progress of time and reason.

We ask, have not your systems of philosophy, has not religion, hitherto, fallen far short of accomplishing the desires of the philanthropist? How much yet remains to be done to remove the vices and sufferings under which society groans in the most civilized and christian countries! This can be effected, we maintain, only by improving the organization of the brain, and thus promoting the supremacy of the moral and the intellectual over the animal.

It is by raising the former and diminishing the latter, alone, that you can lessen the tendency of population to increase beyond the means of subsistence. Unwise marriages are, by far, the most abundant source of misery in civilized communities, and must, at a certain stage of their progress, afflict them, under every form of government. This is a question of self-restraint with which politics has little or nothing to do. A virtuous prudence of paramount authority, absolutely subjecting the habits of the individual to the social welfare, is what is required; and we repeat that this is to be expected only from bringing the physical organization into that condition which shall make the moral and the in-

tellectual an overmatch for the animal, and then shall all be subjected even to the law of Christ. Our doctrine is, that new principles, and their steady and long continued inculcation under a reformed system of education, are the means of effecting the change so desirable. This doctrine we found upon the certain fact, that the condition, habits, and instruction to which a people are subject, exert a sure influence, however imperceptible within short periods, upon their organization. Thus, say the phrenologists, will our science, and that alone, certainly diminish, on a great scale, the crimes and sufferings of mankind, and bring the world without into conformity with the ideal world within.

Phrenology, too, say its friends, shall teach you how to rule as well as reform. Her wise oracles shall prescribe the principles of legislation. She shall teach how to punish in order to amend. She shall enter your prison houses, and lay her hand upon the heads of your criminals. She shall tell you whom you must consign to bondage—whom you may hope to restore to society—how to reclaim the wanderer, to raise the fallen, and to give free course to that gracious religion by which the captive of sin is translated into the liberty of the sons of God.

Phrenologists point to the works of Spurzheim and Coombe for great moral lessons on Toleration, and on Political Economy. These philosophers, they say, have shewn, how it happens that if unjust regulations sometimes lead to riches, these, in their turn, prove the bane of nations; that schemes of national policy and international communication and exchange must be regulated by juster principles, to secure the

continued peace and prosperity of communities. These authors tell us, that they predicate, from observation of the cranium, what powers are in general most energetic, what are the modifications which exist in particular communities, and how the predominance of certain classes of feelings become especially dangerous to the well-being of society, and are the sure precursors of the revolutions and fall of empires.

Finally, they assure us that human ignorance has its source in the small size of the intellectual organs, that hence study is commonly irksome and distasteful, and that the great cause of moral misery is the predominant size and activity of the organs of the selfish and animal propensities.

Such are some of the principal claims of phrenology as urged by its advocates. What shall we say to them? Are the facts to which they appeal, to be considered as questionable? Is the classification founded on them to be considered imaginary? Are the coincidences on which they insist, a delusion? At least, do exceptions bear such a proportion to their rules, that decision is uncertain and not to be relied upon? To what are we to attribute the lucky hits on record which have been made by phrenologists? To these inquiries we look for our answer in the researches of this society. This answer we shall obtain if proper methods of pursuit are adopted.

Approaching the subject as I ought to do in the absence of evidence, without bias, I do not hesitate to declare, that in my opinion, *à priori* reasonings can neither prove nor disprove phrenology. They are never to be relied upon in matters of fact. They are, at

best, but outposts of the temple of truth, sometimes announcing that we are within its precincts. Thus they often supply fortunate anticipations, which observation and experiment convert into knowledge. They direct inquiry and may also be often employed to *account for* facts already discovered; but any deductions derived from them are entitled to full credit, only when attested by actual observation.

The anti-phrenologist admits, that 'in the nervous system we can trace a gradual progress among animals, that we are enabled to associate every faculty which gives superiority with *some* addition to the nervous mass, even from the smallest indications of sensation and will up to the highest degree of sensibility, judgment and expression; that the brain is observed progressively to be improved in its structure, and with reference to the size of the spinal marrow and nerves augmented in volume more and more until we reach the human brain, each addition being marked by some addition to or amplification of the *powers* of the animal, until in man we behold it possessing some parts of which animals are destitute, and wanting none which theirs possess.' Now this account, which is correct, renders it *à priori* probable, that as the scale of animal existence ascends, the accumulating parts are severally destined to special mental functions. But how is this to be proved true? Only by observing that there is a regular coincidence between the development of *certain* cerebral parts and *peculiar* mental manifestations. Some writers against phrenology, unfairly, as it appears to me, have attempted to bar out all evidence in its favor, on objections taken against its metaphysics, and

other methods of à priori reasoning, If, however, the occasional absence of individual parts of the human brain (as in the case of idiots) and their general presence can be proved, if certain functions appear with their presence, increase with their growth, are vigorous in proportion to their size, and if, on the other hand, such functions do not appear at all in their absence, are diminished with their diminished development, and wane with their decay by disease or age, I do not see how such coincidences are to be rejected upon schemes of metaphysical speculation.

I do not therefore object to phrenology because its system of the mind may be incomplete, and, therefore, in some degree, unsatisfactory. The book of knowledge is made up of the leaves which the sybil scattered to the winds; they can be recovered only one by one, and seldom in a regular order; we must take them as we can get them; the volume will probably not be completed, nor its arrangement perfect, till the end of time. These metaphysical objections, therefore, I consider of little weight.

But some anatomists have contended, that *individual parts* of the brain cannot be proved—that it cannot be shewn the brain is not a unit. If so, there is an end of phrenology. A factor necessary to the result is struck out from the computation, and it is in vain to proceed with it. Let us see what are the facts. The brain consists of *two* distinct hemispheres, the right and left; all its parts are duplicated, the anterior, middle and posterior lobes are always distinguishable from each other. Each as compared with the others, is subject to constant variation of size. The same we are assured by

Dr. Spurzheim is true of the different portions of these lobes. We are assured by him that the *general* form of the convolutions is remarkably regular, so much so that he could always distinguish, what he calls the different organs, even when detached from the mass of the brain. Thus the places and boundaries of the different sections assigned by phrenologists to different functions can be distinctly ascertained. A well practised phrenologist has no more difficulty, for instance, in placing his finger on that part of the brain assigned, whether rightly or not, to cautiousness or hope, or any other specified faculty, than an expert anatomist in cutting with his scalpel upon the cutaneous nerve of the arm or leg, or upon one of the carotid arteries. Still, however, the evidence of a plurality of organs does not yet appear, and without its admission there is no phrenology. We have advanced no farther than the demonstration of variety in the shape and arrangement of what, for aught we yet know, may be a single organ. What is absolutely required to prove a plurality of parts is, that with the absence of certain portions, indicated by the phrenological divisions, there should be absence of the assigned functions, with their presence the presence of the functions, and that the vigor of these should be proportionate to the relative development of the *particular* parts. For instance, phrenologists place the intellectual faculties in the anterior lobes; they ascertain their relative size by measuring them forward from the outer convolutions assigned to *constructiveness*, and adding to this admeasurement their breadth and height. They maintain, that upon the relative size of the forehead, *so* measured, depends

the *intellectual* capacity. The division thus made, they call the frontal region. They divide off another region assigned to the moral faculties, another to feelings mainly selfish, a fourth to animal propensities, each having its own name; declaring, that the *relative* development of these respective parts will determine (proper allowance being made for circumstances) the moral and animal characteristics of the individual. Now if this is true, it proves to my mind a plurality of parts in the brain. Separate general portions—separate classes of functions—and thus certain *general* phrenological conclusions are established. Phrenologists further assert, that in the brains of idiots, certain convolutions have been constantly found wanting; and they maintain that the deficiency of mental manifestation, is, in some way or other (inexplicable, if you please) connected with the deficient structure. The *number* of parts, must, of course, go on increasing just in proportion as special powers can be shewn, coincident with their relative development. Thus, to take a single case, if in a dozen instances of persons remarkable for caution, the convolutions assigned to that faculty, (however arbitrarily, or by whatever *chance* if you will) are found large compared with the *common* standard, and the direct *contrary* takes place in the same number of persons distinguished for their carelessness, I say, if this be so, there is truth in phrenology, and no *à priori* reasoning can overturn it. The same method of inquiry may be extended to other parts in connection with other functions. I am here endeavoring to indicate *the method of investigation* for us.

I would observe in this place, that in the actual ex-

amination of human heads, there are great difficulties to be surmounted, before we can appreciate the evidence of phrenology. These difficulties are of a kind which occur in all sciences requiring a preliminary education of the senses. The truth is, *their* ignorance, want of acuteness, and prejudice, are, at the introduction of all such sciences, a great bar to their admission. I allude to this fact, so familiar in philosophical history, to put us on our guard in our first attempts to decypher the oracles of phrenology. 'Those,' only, says Dr. Spurzheim, 'who have engaged in such studies, know how long the eyes must be exercised, before they can detect every difference in forms and sizes at a glance.'

I have only time to say, then, that great care will be necessary in our first inquiries, to avoid conclusions unfavorable to phrenology, without perceiving that the difficulty lies in our own incapacity to judge, from a want of a patient preliminary exercise of our sensible powers of discernment. We ought to be no less upon our guard against crude and hasty judgments. I have thought some of the preceding remarks not out of place, because, if the reasonings to which I have objected, are admitted, they are a bar in limine to investigation, and the formation of our society would be futile.

Much has been said by the Edinburgh Reviewers, about the difficulty of ascertaining the real characters of individuals. This part of the subject has its difficulties, and they are often great: but they must be encountered with or without phrenology, and men do judge, and will continue to judge and act too in the most important conjunctures upon their judgments, as

to the intellectual and moral characters of their fellow-men. The phrenologist contends, that he has special advantages, that having ascertained the coincidence of particular manifestations with certain mental peculiarities, in a few well marked cases, the former, on principles of safe induction, may be always employed afterwards, to decypher the latter. You will observe, however, that these observations refer exclusively to the possibility of *determining* with certainty on the truth of phrenology, and are not intended to imply, that I take that truth for *granted*.

Attempts have been made to put down phrenology, by excluding investigation on other grounds than those already stated. Its enemies have said, that it is an *irreligious* science—that it leads to *materialism*. The objection I have to this argument is, that it is entirely senseless. My allegation against it, is, not that it is false, but unintelligible. The question, *whether the brain thinks*, is mere logomachy; the words, however correct in grammatical construction, have not any correspondent ideas, and cannot have. We are limited in the attainment of knowledge to the exercise of the senses, of the knowing and of the reflective faculties. Now by what conceivable exaltation of the powers of *sensible* discernment, can we be supposed to *perceive* thought—*particles* in the act of *thinking*—or by what knowing or reflective faculty can we form a notion of such a process in the brain? Consequently, whether the brain thinks, is a question just as intelligible as that attributed to the old schoolmen, ‘whether a chimera, bounding in a vacuum, could eat up the second intentions.’

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Is such nonsense as this to stand in the way of scientific investigation, or to weaken the hopes and expectations which lay hold on eternal life?

Another bug-bear lying across our path, has received the portentous name of Fatalism. Heart-congealing apparition! Frightful monster! The second-born of Phrenology! Then we are told, that if we admit that organization influences human actions, there is an end with the freedom of the will, of human Responsibility. Indeed! Phrenology is about to introduce some strange revolutions into this world of ours. No sooner is its name pronounced, than, like mother sin, when she heard that of death, we are to be scared from our propierties, and to eschew all farther inquiry into its merits as dangerous to every respectable notion, with which good sort of people have, hitherto, satisfied their philosophic selves, and which they have taken for granted in their intelligent and worthy neighbors!

Into what, say the phrenologists, does free will resolve itself? Do we deny that man can do what he pleases? And will those, who are against investigating the claims of phrenology, deny that *how* a man has pleased to do what he has done, is often a mystery which they cannot solve. Will they deny, that a man has often a strong desire, influencing him to a certain action—that he sees it ought not to be gratified—that his moving powers are at his command, to abstain or perform. Now this is free will enough for us, say they. At last, however, under the influence of his strong desire, he *does* the deed. Now will it be said the action was without a cause? That there was an agent without a motive? Who shall comprehend all this?

Man *is* a creature of motives after all, and we shall see, presently, thoroughly responsible. What matters it then, whether the action is ascribed to the influence of *a few grains of brain*, or to some other inexplicable cause *in the constitution of the mind*, equally independent of the agent. Is it very easy to shew that organization has nothing to do with our tendencies and actions, and may be safely excluded from the motive powers? If, moreover, phrenologists are right about the brain, it may be improved, and evil motives from that quarter be diminished; but what power have you over the essence of the mind? So that we phrenologists have the advantage here. To satisfy some reasoners, say they, man must be unmade: must cease to be a being influenced by motives, which is inconceivable.

But responsibility—ah, we must take care of that! Oh, be assured, reply the phrenologists, that nature, or rather the wise Being who presides over nature, has done that for you. Responsibility consists in the necessity of obeying a law, or of suffering the penalty annexed to its breach. To the natural laws all sentient beings are subject, and in this sense, must respond or answer to the law, whether known or not. If an insect flies into a jar about to be exhausted of air, it will certainly perish during the operation; it answers, with its life, to the law which requires, that to its continued respiration it should breathe the atmosphere. If an idiot is guilty of a debauch, he will probably not escape a sick head-ache. The moral law *extends* the sphere of responsibility, and has its own peculiar penalties: with this difference, however, that its re-

quisitions are addressed to those who have faculties adapted to understand and obey them. It is this latter circumstance which incurs, not responsibility, merely, for that must ever exist with every form of law, but *guilt* in the breach of the moral laws. To say, that the influence of organization abolishes responsibility, would be to say, that a man might be selfish, unjust, injurious, sensual, without incurring the penalties annexed to such a disregard of moral obligation, that he might expect to be loved, and trusted, and not to become the subject of hatred and resentment, and to enjoy his health, just as if he had exhibited the opposite qualities. But is this the case? In a word, say the phrenologists, the *Deity* has devised the penalties which he has annexed to the breach of his own laws, moral and physical, and they are, doubtless, the best that could have been devised, and will, in the end, be the most efficacious possible, in insuring the obedience, and consequent general happiness of his creatures. We may be assured that our speculations will never abrogate them, nor redeem us from their certain and inexorable agency. The laws proclaimed by Revelation, constitute another code with its own peculiar penalties, and enlarge man's responsibility just in proportion to their certainty, character and number. Our opponents, say the phrenologists, mean, if they have any definite meaning, that, if the influence of organization is admitted, the doctrine of moral guilt cannot be maintained. The mere plain statement of such a proposition, is all that is necessary, to expose its absurdity. The promulgation of the moral law is a fact: and it is one of the characteristics and the noblest priv-

ilege of man, that he can comprehend the law, and its necessity to the general happiness. Among contending motives a choice is left him, and with his power of choice is combined *a sense of duty*, which, however overborne, entails self-reproach on the transgressor. Thus, though in the contemplation of our faculties, we are often led to the brink of mystery, facts always shew us the straight road of practical duty.

The truth is, that the class of objectors to whom we have referred, are uneasy that any thing is beyond their comprehension. The real question they would ask, is, why are things as they are? And nature has appointed no oracle to deliver an answer. Man's business is *to do his duty* with humility and hope.

‘ Hope humbly, then, on trembling pinions soar,
Wait the great teacher, death, and *God adore.*’

Such are some of the leading objections to phrenology. They do not appear to me to be sufficiently formidable, to deter us from an honest and persevering investigation of the evidence upon which it is said to be founded.

In joining this society, I take it for granted, that all the means necessary to determine on the truth or illusiveness of phrenology, will be provided, and that every facility will be afforded for acquiring a thorough knowledge of it. I need not dwell on the importance of anatomy, in every physiological investigation. The society should provide for a thorough system of instruction in the anatomy of the brain, spinal marrow, and nerves of the senses. There will be gentlemen among our members, able, and I am confident, willing,

to undertake the demonstrations. The anatomy of the cranium within and without, together with the external coverings, should be understood. In demonstrating the cranium, the places of the respective organs, assigned by phrenologists, and their boundaries, should be pointed out. These should also be shewn on the brain itself, and their position should be always indicated in connexion with the sutures eminences and depressions of the different bones, which have received anatomical designations. In this way our members will become familiar with the exact seat of the organs, and be able to determine their relative size, when they approach them in the living head.

Dr. Spurzheim dwelt much on the importance of considering the *general* shape of the head, apart from isolated prominences, or depressions. With reference to this object, the society should spare no pains in obtaining a well selected assortment of national skulls. The history of nations may thus be studied in direct connexion with organization, and in this way, as it seems to me, the truth of phrenology in its general outlines, be at once verified, or disproved. The society should lose no opportunity of laying military and naval officers, captains of merchant ships, and travellers, under contribution in this respect, or of obtaining supernumerary specimens, with which sister societies may be disposed to favor us. Casts already in existence, and which, in the opinion of experienced phrenologists, may be necessary fully to verify the data of the science, should be procured and deposited in the museum.

I think the Curators should be instructed in the

best methods of taking casts, or busts, in order to enable the society, at any time to procure accurate ones of criminals, or of distinguished individuals in any line, who may be willing to submit to the operation. To procure such should be a constant object with the society.

The examination of the heads of criminals, of children of extraordinary ability and character, of the insane, of idiots, of persons committing suicide, and of those born with the absence of one or more of the senses, will be among the best means of verifying phrenology.

In our attempts to understand the organization of the head, we should proceed gradually. The regions should first be understood, and our efforts be confined to ascertaining the truth of the general doctrine connected with them. Then the inquirer should proceed to the particular organs—and, thence to the consideration of some of the leading combinations as found in the heads of men distinguished in particular pursuits, as mathematicians, musicians, painters, mechanics, &c. This will be the only method of avoiding failure and discouragement in our early attempts to decypher the oracles of phrenology.

Our members should be invited to communicate freely the results of individual inquiry and observation, and a record should at once be opened for such as are deemed important. Dr. Spurzheim thought that the comparative anatomy of the brain should never be lost sight of as a means of verifying phrenology. He has told us it is very useful to compare the cerebral organization of animals endowed with like powers, or

to contrast this with that of such as are destitute of these faculties. Persons who never heard of phrenology, jockeys and farmers, judge of the tractableness of a horse by the form of his forehead, that is by the development of his brain. A horse that is narrow between the ears, Dr. Spurzheim assured us, will always be shy, and the converse is equally true. The temper of a dog, or a monkey, may be determined by the form of the anterior part of the frontal bone, that is, by the shape of that part of the brain which lies under it. We have already shewn, that the faculties are multiplied as the cerebral parts become more numerous. These are facts worth thinking of, as they shew the influence of comparative anatomy on inquiries into the functions of the human brain.

Our opportunities for examining the brains of animals may not be as extensive as are supplied in Europe, particularly in France, where comparative anatomy is cultivated with ardor; but many may be found every where by the earnest inquirer into nature, and should be carefully turned to account. The crania of different tribes of animals then, should be obtained as extensively as possible, in making our collection.

If the result of our investigation be conviction of the truth of phrenology, a very wide and interesting field of labor will be presented to the members of our society. In the first place it will be our duty to incite the *public*, by every means in our power, to a serious consideration of its claims. It has been said, that phrenology can never be made useful. If the science be true, I must dissent altogether from such an opinion. An accurate knowledge of the functions of the

brain, and of the manifestations by which they are indicated in particular cases, is knowledge of the human mind, and a much more specific knowledge than can be attained independent of physiology. It would be vain to reason with persons, who, granting such a knowledge attainable, deny its utility. To make known the claims of phrenology, then, would be our first duty, if convinced of its truth.

It is not to be denied, that the science is an extremely difficult one. But what science is not so? Be phrenology ever so true, few, we grant, will become profound phrenologists. But are many persons profound in any science? The arts, founded upon other sciences, are practised by persons of every variety of capacity. It is the elect only who excel. 'To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.' Such is the ordination of nature in these matters. But the profound phrenologist will be specific and practical, after all. If phrenology be true, and should ever obtain the same attention as other useful sciences, there will always be a few adequate to judge with accuracy. Hence, by inviting attention to its claims, and thus engaging numbers to study it, we shall promote its practical uses.

Our society, if convinced that the principles of phrenology have their foundation in nature, will, I repeat, be bound by every consideration of duty and of honor to proclaim their opinion; and in that case, I trust no individual amongst us will hesitate or falter. In that case too, we shall find ourselves at once engaged in the application of the data of this new science to many

branches of anthropology. I think the principle of calling into exercise the activity of our individual members should prevail with us throughout, both in investigating the science, and, supposing its claims to appear satisfactory, in its subsequent application to different branches of knowledge. Let every member, as far as possible, be invited to take a part according to his particular talents, taste, occupation, or profession. A division of labor in this way, will be of the utmost importance, both in maintaining our interest and energy in the pursuit, and in making known the truth. One may be employed in demonstrating the anatomy. Another in exhibiting the physiological proofs. A third may take the metaphysical department, inquiring into the application of the principles of phrenology to the mental powers. Others may be employed in considering its application to education. The comparative influence of education, and of native powers in directing to particular pursuits, in insuring success in them, and in the establishment of the moral character, is a curious and important subject, and one by no means exhausted. This subject should be considered with reference to different grades of mind. It is manifest, there are powers which shape their own ends, as the magnet amongst a thousand substances attracts the particles of its kindred metal. Again, in moral goodness, there are those who are a law unto themselves. But there are others, constituting the middle classes in intellect and morals, to whom education is of greater importance. These are mere hints. It is of course impossible, on this occasion, to descend far into the subject.

The Divine may inquire into the harmony existing

between the moral and intellectual laws, and the sublime lessons and glorious hopes of Christianity. Popular essays, founded on phrenology, would have all the interest of novelty, and, descending to the details of private manners, and social habitudes, might be fraught with practical lessons, coming immediately home to men's business and bosoms. Vanity, pride, luxury, the follies and the vices of the time, which have defied other correctives, might feel the force of a new mode of assault, and something be gained by the additional impulse thus employed against them.

Indeed if the science be true there is no department of social life to which its influence will not extend. The politician, and the jurist, are eminently interested in the results of the inquiry we propose. The principles of legislation must inevitably feel the influence of a new analysis of the powers of the human mind, if founded in nature and truth. Laws have always improved with the progress of knowledge, or the trial by jury had never been substituted for the wager of battle. But if the truth of phrenology should ever acquire general assent, it will originate a new charter for man, and one that will go far deeper than that of Runnymede in laying the foundation of human rights, laws, and practices.

Phrenology, if it be not an illusion, must form the basis of political economy. The data of that science can never be relied upon, unless they be in harmony with the elements of the human character, and be founded upon the dictates of the higher sentiments.

The same is true of the law of nations, as well as of that which regulates the intercourse of the different

portions of the same community. Each must depend upon the discovery of the true principles which propel man to associate and deal with his fellows, which strike the balance justly between his selfish interests and his social duties, which exalt to their just pre-eminence the nobler sentiments of his nature, and suggest efficacious means of establishing, maintaining, and perpetuating their ascendancy. Prison discipline, the causes and remedies of pauperism, and the management of the insane, are all connected with the science of the mind, and if phrenology be in possession of the secrets of this science, it is intimately connected with every one of these subjects, and must suggest important practical views respecting them.

But I forbear to enlarge on the results of the truth of phrenology. They touch every subject of anthropology, and I shall make an end of this last head of my subject by observing, that if phrenology be an illusion, the effect of our testimony will not be lost in proclaiming it such; and in *that* alternative our duty is not less obvious and imperative than in the other.

Let us not be deterred from a sober investigation of the subject by attacks ingeniously devised to act upon the pride of intellect; by the appellation of second-rate men, or third-rate men, or even fourth-rate men, enthusiasts, gatherers of worthless fruit from the minor twigs of the tree of knowledge, and so forth. These epithets are often employed by the selfish and superficial, in order to intimate that they cannot be deserved by themselves. It is no uncommon thing to see ridicule sitting in the solemn chair of decision, laughing like an idiot at the phantoms of its own creation.

Some will be indisposed to hazard an intellectual name by joining us. They attend lectures on phrenology as an amusement, or at most, because stray crumbs worth picking up, may be expected occasionally to fall, or because the ingenuity of the lecturer may invite them to spend in this way an idle hour. Others, who feel curiosity and interest on the subject, cannot without hazard to private interests become active members of a phrenological society. Many who are not with us will not be against us. I am disposed to believe that few persons have decided with themselves that phrenology is not true. However this may be, we have associated for a specific object—we choose to act independently—we are strictly inquirers—we neither sue for, nor shun associates. Let this be our course as a society. Let us honestly declare that phrenology comes so commended to us, that we feel inclined to examine its claims, and having done so, let us fearlessly and conscientiously report accordingly.



BOSTON PHRENOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

This Society was organized December 31, 1832, it being the birth-day of the late DR. SPURZHEIM.

The following members were elected officers for the ensuing year:—

REV. JOHN PIERPONT, *President.*

DR. JONATHAN BARBER, *Vice-President.*

S. G. HOWE, M. D. *Corresponding Secretary.*

NAHUM CAPEN, *Recording Secretary.*

E. P. CLARK, *Treasurer.*

Council.

J. F. FLAGG, M. D.

JOSEPH W. Mc KEAN, M. D.

WINSLOW LEWIS, JR. M. D.

WM. B. FOWLE.

At a meeting of the Boston Phrenological Society, Feb. 4th, 1833, it was voted to print, in connexion with the Address of Dr. Barber, the following proceedings of the *Edinburgh Phrenological Society*, in relation to the death of DR. SPURZHEIM.

Edinburgh, Dec. 20, 1832.

EXTRACTS FROM MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE PHRENOLOGICAL SOCIETY, DEC. 13, 1832.

James Simpson, Esq. in the chair.

After the discussion on the papers read to the meeting, the President addressed the Society in nearly the following words:—

‘GENTLEMEN,—During the twelve years of this society’s existence, no communication has ever been made to it so afflicting as that which it is now my painful duty to make to you. Dr. Spurzheim is no more! He died of fever, brought on by over-exertion in his great vocation, at Boston in the United States, on the 10th day of last month.

‘The death of Dr. Gall, the great founder of phrenology, was not without its alleviations. He had run his course, had done all that seemed in the decrees of the All-wise, allotted him on earth to do, and fell like a shock of corn fully ripe. Above all, Dr. Spurzheim his great pupil survived, heir of all his master’s wealth, and richer than even that master in treasures of his own. But Dr. Spurzheim himself is now snatched away in the midst of his usefulness, at the summit of his power, about to pour the true philosophy of man, like a flood of light on the transatlantic world, this is indeed a blow almost devoid of alleviation.

‘And yet hope deserts us not. To his own genius we owe the discovery of the organ of Hope, and a beautiful exposition of its functions. As we bend over his early grave, a ray breaks forth even from that dark abode. America has celebrated his obsequies with public honors, and ranks him with the illustrious dead. Europe will sanction the award. His philosophic page will live, and even pride and prejudice will look into the philosophy, when the philosopher whom they shunned when alive, is no more. Galileo, Newton, and Harvey, were all destined to teach from the tomb; so are Spurzheim and Gall. They too are among the great departed, “who are dead yet speak,”

and many a kindred genius will yet arise to listen to their voice. The minds already laboring in the great work, by them bequeathed, will be stimulated by the very thought that they are bereft of their leaders. A hand to grasp *all* the inheritance may not be; but there does live a prophet who will wear gracefully the mantle that has now descended upon him. May all of us, however humbly each, make redoubled exertions, do that which our teacher would have urged us to do with his dying accents; promote by all that in us lies the cause for which he lived and in which he died. His labors were as expansive as they were indefatigable, no scope was too great for them; he had gone to add the new world to the old in one wide empire of truth. Alas! that America's first tribute to her illustrious guest should be a grave, and a monument! Be her's the care and custody of his honored remains; the spirit of his genius is every where; his memory is the cherished legacy of the human race.'

Mr. Combe then read to the society a letter dated New York, November 16, 1832, from Robert Mc Kibbin, M. D. detailing the particulars of Dr. Spurzheim's death, and another letter dated, Boston, Nov. 15, 1832, from Nahum Capen, Esq. to a similar effect.

The following resolutions were moved by Mr. Combe, seconded by Mr. Dun, and adopted unanimously.

'First, that this society have heard the communication now made, with sentiments of the most heartfelt regret. While they deplore the premature death of Dr. Spurzheim, as by far the greatest loss which the philosophy of mind and man can in their present state

sustain, they lament it as an especial bereavement to themselves of a valued and beloved benefactor and friend.

‘Secondly, that this society feel deeply, and, considering their intimate and affectionate relation to the illustrious deceased, gratefully, the intense concern manifested by the citizens of Boston, over his sick-bed, the public sorrow for his loss, and the intended honors to his remains, and his memory, and they experience comfort in the reflection, since it was in the Divine decrees that that great man was so soon to be taken away, that he did finish his mortal career in the midst of a people enlightened enough to discern his distinguished talents and worth, and duly to appreciate the philosophy which he had come among them to teach.

‘Third, that an extract of this minute be sent to Dr. Mc Kibbin, and Mr. Nahum Capen, with the thanks of the society for their kind attention in making their communications.’

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